The Middlebury Campus

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MASK MANDATE ENDS AFTER TWO YEARS

By EMILY HOGAN
Layout Editor

Middlebury's new mask policy, which eliminates the mask mandate in all indoor spaces except classrooms and a few other designated areas, went into effect on Friday, March 18 at 3:00 p.m. The policy states that masks are optional, which means that those who wish to continue wearing masks may do so.

An email sent to all Middlebury students, faculty and staff through the Middlebury Updates network on March 9 said, "masks are welcome and encouraged for anyone who wishes to continue to wear a mask. We ask that community members exercise kindness, compassion, and patience toward others in support of their personal choices."

Smita Ruzicka, Vice President for Student Affairs, said that the mask policy change may help open doors to further strengthen the Middlebury community.

"We are hoping that this sort of starts relieving some of the burden around learning, the student experience, and for folks to sort of gather in community," she said.

Ruzicka hopes that future endemic management will allow students to share more meaningful interactions with peers while simultaneously ensuring that all community members feel their health and safety are valued as a priority.

Ruzicka also notes that the impetus for the mask policy change was motivated by the State of Vermont's removal of the indoor mask mandate, including in schools, which occurred on March 14. The masking remains optional to consider those who may be more at risk or may feel more comfortable continuing to wear a mask.

"We are a community that wants to support your choice in terms of whether or not you want to be masked or not," Ruzicka said.

This change in policy highlights Middlebury's attempt to shift from a top-down approach regarding Covid-19 matters to a more community-based approach. While the administration was previously responsible for organizing testing, isolation and preventing the spread of the virus, these duties now rest on the community. The widespread allocation of antigen tests is intended to allow students to test — and stay away from gatherings — when they have symptoms, and to isolate if they test positive. When planning events, organizers are encouraged to think of all the ways they can keep themselves and those attending stay safe. The administration is also handing over responsibility for contact tracing to individual community members.

"Students and employees [who test positive] will be responsible for notifying their friends, professors, classmates and others if they were in close proximity with or without masks for longer than a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period," the college wrote in a Middlebury Updates email to the school.

In designing this new policy, the Middlebury administration consulted with the Faculty Council as well as numerous individual faculty and staff members to gather a wide range of opinions on the matter.

"But then we also incorporated that feedback into how the state of Vermont is moving, [and] what would be in the best interest of our community in general," Ruzicka said. Integrated into this decision was the consideration and protection of those who were most vulnerable in the Middlebury community.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Board of Trustees approves 4.5% tuition increase

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

The Board of Trustees approved a 4.5% increase in tuition on March 15, raising the total cost of undergraduate tuition to $62,000 and room and board to $17,800 for the 2022–23 academic year. Additionally, the student activities fee will increase $20 to $460, bringing the total cost of attendance at Middlebury to more than $80,000.

An announcement released by the college on March 23 mentioned the Covid-19 pandemic and inflation as continuing financial burdens. The announcement also emphasized how admission to Middlebury is need-blind and full demonstrated financial need is met. Almost 50% of students receive financial aid, with an average grant of around $57,000.

The Board of Trustees has approved annual rises in tuition over the past couple of years. Tuition was raised 3.25% for the 2019–20 school year, and another 3.73 percent for the 2020–21 year. In February 2021, tuition was raised 2.5% for the current academic year as the Board of Trustees took measures to balance the budget.

"While the increase is higher than some in recent years, we are able to keep it to 4.5 percent — below the inflation rate of 7.5 percent — because of positive investment returns on the endowment and robust enrollments," Associate Vice President for Student Financial Services Kim Downs-Burns said in an email to parents.

The tuition increase is not unique to Middlebury. Williams College and Tufts University will increase tuition by 3.5%, Colby College by 3.75%, and Hamilton College and Amherst College by 4.5%. Other NESCAC schools have not yet announced tuition rates for the 2022–23 academic year.

SPORTS

PERFECT SEASON: WOMEN'S HOCKEY WINS SIXTH NATIONAL TITLE IN DRAMATIC FASHION

By BLAISE SIEFER
Senior Sports Editor

For a brief moment, the Panthers thought they had clinched the national title at the end of regular time.

There was confusion on the ice when Gustavus Adolphus' Molly McHugh poked a rebound into the net at the end of the third period. No time remained after the scramble in front of Middlebury's goal, but had the puck crossed the goal line in the nick of time?

After ten excruciating minutes of deliberation, the referees rightly ruled that the visitors had scored with just one-tenth of a second remaining. The game, tied at two points apiece, was headed to overtime.

"You talk about a swing of emotions. I'm hugging [Assistant Coach Ashley Solerno] on the bench, half of our team is on the ice going to celebrate with the goalie," Middlebury Head Coach Bill Mandigo said postgame. "And then all of a sudden, it's a goal, and we have to go back in the locker room."

But as any great team does, the Panthers bounced back from the heartbreak in overtime. The team played an uptempo brand of hockey and found their rhythm offensively, outshooting the Gusties, 7–0. It seemed like only a matter of time before the Panthers found the winner, and sure enough, with 13:17 expired, Ellie Barney '21.5 delivered the decisive blow.

For the sixth time in program history, the Panthers were national champions.

"I have no words for it. Being on that ice, watching Ellie put away that goal... everything you work for, it comes to fruition," senior captain Madie Leidt '22 said. "Not many people are able to say they're 27–0–0 and we are — it's an incredible feeling."

COURTESY OF WILL COSTELLO

The celebrations begin for the Panthers, who defeated Gustavus Adolphus College, 3–2, after an overtime goal from Ellie Barney '21.5 on Saturday, March 19.

A back and forth match

Middlebury entered the championship game after defeating Elmira College, 3–2, on Friday, March 18. On the other side of the bracket, Gustavus Adolphus cruised past Plattsburgh State in a 5-1 win. The No. 1 seeded Panthers earned the right to host the final two rounds of the tournament.

The game opened with back-to-back power plays for the Gustavus Adolphus Gusties, but the Panthers weathered the storm. With 13:44 gone in the first, Jenna Letterie '22.5 broke the deadlock, scoring on a breakaway — the Panthers' first shorthanded goal of the season.

In the second stanza, the Gusties' pressure continued to mount, culminating in a goal from junior forward Clara Billings with 7:30 left on the clock.

Strong goaltending from Sophia Merageas '24 and the Gusties' Katie McCoy kept the game firmly tied at 1–1, until Leidt scored her 19th goal of the season with just 2:47 remaining in the third period. To all watching, Leidt's goal looked set to be the game winner.

But the Gusties didn't capitulate, pulling their goalkeeper and owning a 6-on-4 skating advantage after a delay of game penalty from Eva Hendrikson '22.5.

In the final seconds of the game, a scramble began in front of Middlebury's goal, with Molly McHugh of the Gusties finding the loose puck and sliding it home.

For a moment, the Panthers looked incredulous — their perfect season was thrown in jeopardy in the most dramatic of circumstances. But if this year's team has taught fans anything, it's that they play to the very end. Before overtime, Leidt skated over to Merageas, encouraging the rookie goaltender to keep her head up — the game wasn't over yet.

"There were a few teammates coming up to me and saying don't worry, either way it goes we'll get another one," Merageas said. "We're going to come back stronger."

From the onset of overtime, the Panthers looked the hungrier team. Middlebury controlled possession and darted toward every puck, putting immense pressure on the Gusties' back line. And after 13 minutes of overtime play, the Gusties finally cracked.

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SPORTS

Middlebury sports teams travel and compete across country for spring break
By BEN WAGNER

Open water. Dry grass. Warm weather. Team bonding. Last week, many of Middlebury's varsity and club...

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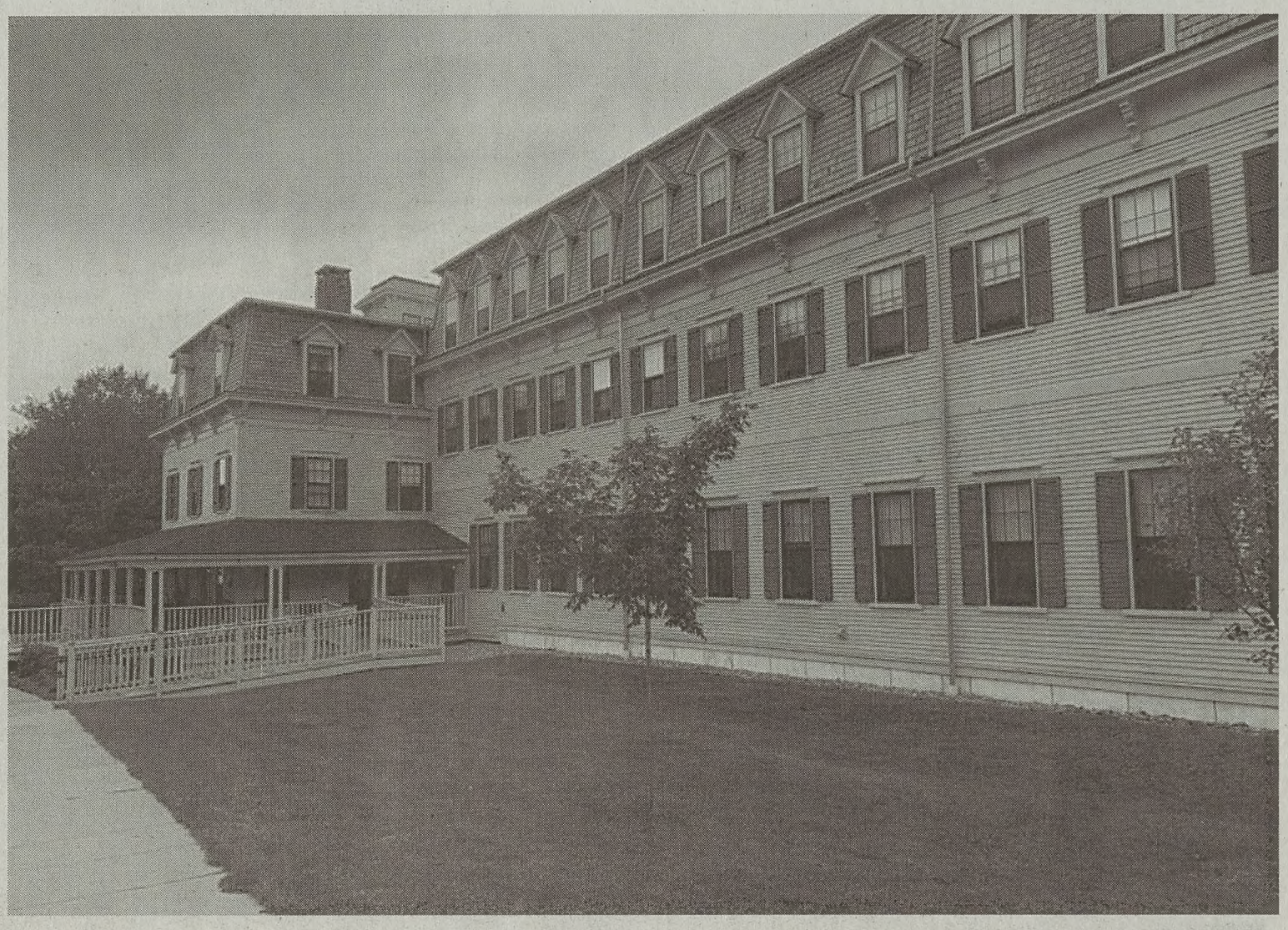
Students who lived at Bread Loaf, Marriott, or Inn on the Green to receive priority in spring room draw

By LAUREN THOMSON
Contributing Writer



Sam Lipin/The Middlebury Campus

Students who lived at Bread Loaf for more than four weeks will participate in an advanced housing selection process this spring.

Students who lived in Bread Loaf, the Marriott or the Inn on the Green in the fall will be eligible to participate in an advanced housing selection process on April 13, prior to the rest of their peers.

Those who lived in any of these residences for four or more weeks will be able to select from all senior and junior housing options available a week prior to the regular senior and junior housing selection process. These housing options will include suites and townhouses as long as the group can completely fill each bed in the space.

This housing selection option was offered as an incentive for students who had to live off campus due to over-enrollment in the fall. Dean of Students Derek Doucet said in an email last summer that the college had around 330 more students enrolled than in a typical year. This led to 63 students being assigned housing at Bread Loaf, 15 students being assigned housing in the Marriott Hotel and 20 at the Inn on the Green at the start of the year.

The college struggled to fill spots at Bread Loaf through volunteers, and students who were not already assigned during the housing lottery had no housing choices other than Bread Loaf if they wanted to attend classes on campus during the fall semester.

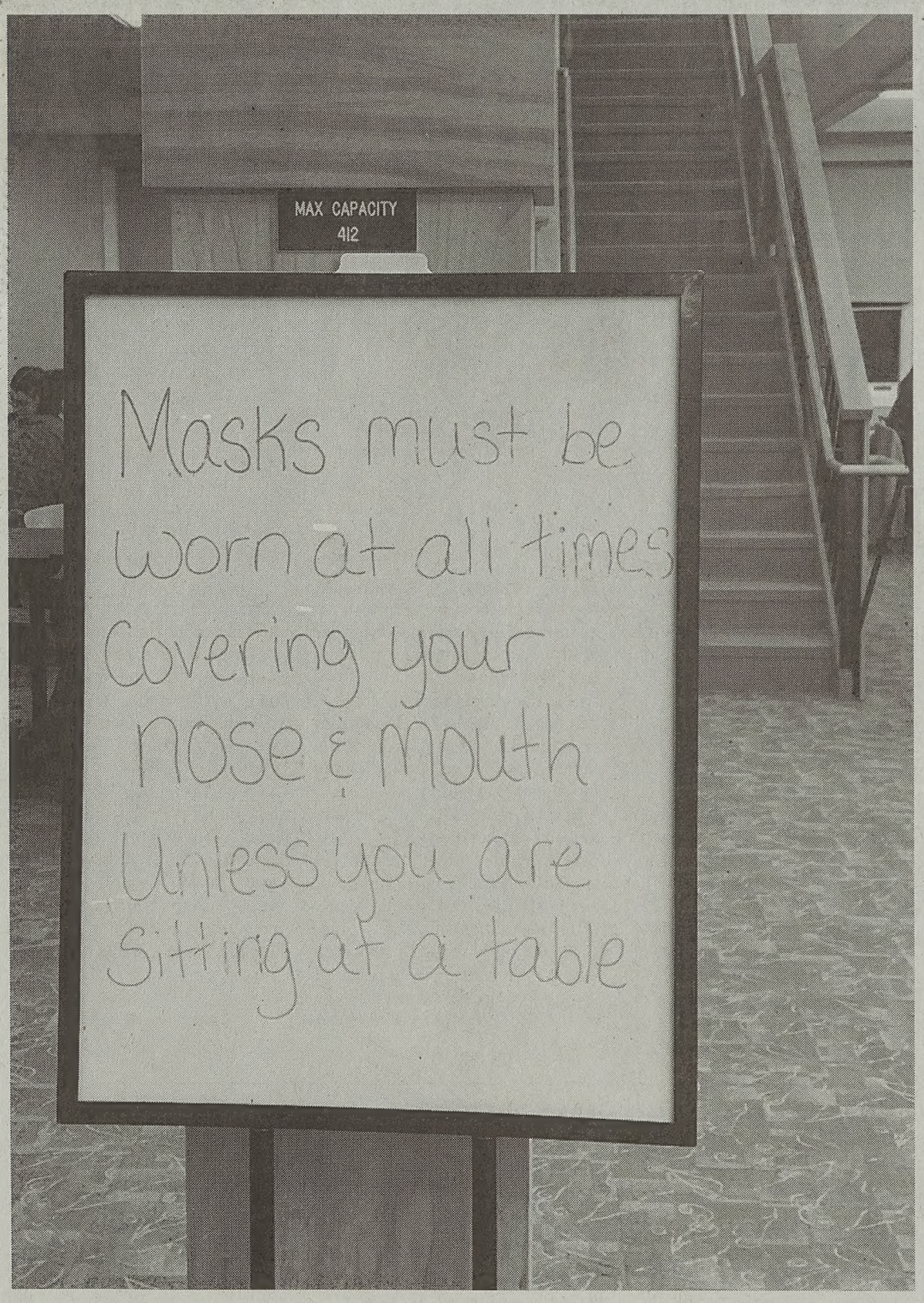
Despite the college's hope for housing at Bread Loaf to offer a "vibrant, active, and connected student community," many students living at the satellite campus were unhappy with the isolation and commute. Several moved back onto the main campus as soon as opportunities became available, hoping to live closer to peers and classes. Students who moved out of Bread Loaf, the Marriott or the Inn prior to the four week mark are not eligible to receive housing during the advanced selection period.

In an email to The Campus, Assistant Director of Housing Operations Courtney Savage said that ResLife will not be able to determine the total number of students involved in the priority housing selection until the application closes on April 10. Students participating in the priority group will either be students who lived at one of the off-campus housing locations or the friends they pulled into their housing group.

According to Savage, information regarding the specifics of the housing process will be clearly laid out in an email that will be sent out to participants the week before April 13. There will also be an information session that students can attend on April 7.

Students that lived at Bread Loaf are excited about the upcoming housing process. Ethan Moss '23 lived at Bread Loaf throughout the fall semester and J-Term, only moving out this spring. Bread Loaf was not his first choice for housing and he ended up living there due to the limited spaces available on campus. Moss sees the priority housing selection as an upside to the Bread Loaf housing situation.

"I think that it's definitely fair," Moss said. "We were given priority housing for this semester too for when we moved back onto campus. I think it's really nice that they are giving us the option to have good housing for an entire year."



Abigail Chang/The Middlebury Campus

A sign in Proctor Dining Hall on March 4 reminded students to wear masks unless seated at a table. As of March 18, masks are no longer required in indoor spaces, including dining halls.

Mask mandate ends after two years

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"We wanted to also give departments and specific buildings and areas the agency and autonomy to decide whether or not they wanted to require masks in their settings," Ruzicka said. Buildings and spaces in which masks are required will display the proper signage to indicate this to students and faculty.

There are, however, certain places in which the mask mandate will remain in place. These include classrooms as well as other designated areas such as Parton Health Center.

The gathering size limit for student events had already been lifted earlier in the spring, but this new policy will now allow organizers to offer food at their events. The lifting of the mask mandate also encourages a return to typical spring events. Ruzicka notes that MCAB is currently planning to bring speakers to campus and organize a spring concert.

"We are really encouraging both our student organizations as well as departments to do the events they typically do in this time of year," Ruzicka said.

Future changes to the current mask policy, including a removal of the mask mandate in classes, rely on the state of the community during this current policy and changing policies in Vermont.

"Our hope is that we are trying to be on the road to endemic management and part of that is really trying to get out of a lot of restrictive policies and prescriptive protocols," Ruzicka said.

> Ruzicka hopes that future endemic management will allow students to share more meaningful interactions with peers while simultaneously ensuring that all community members feel their health and safety are valued as a priority.

According to Ruzicka, Middlebury is in frequent communication with peer institutions in Vermont, as well as state health leaders and stakeholders, to guide their decisions. There is not a known date in which the campus might adopt a fully mask-optional policy, though Ruzicka and the Middlebury administration are hopeful that this might be the case in the future.

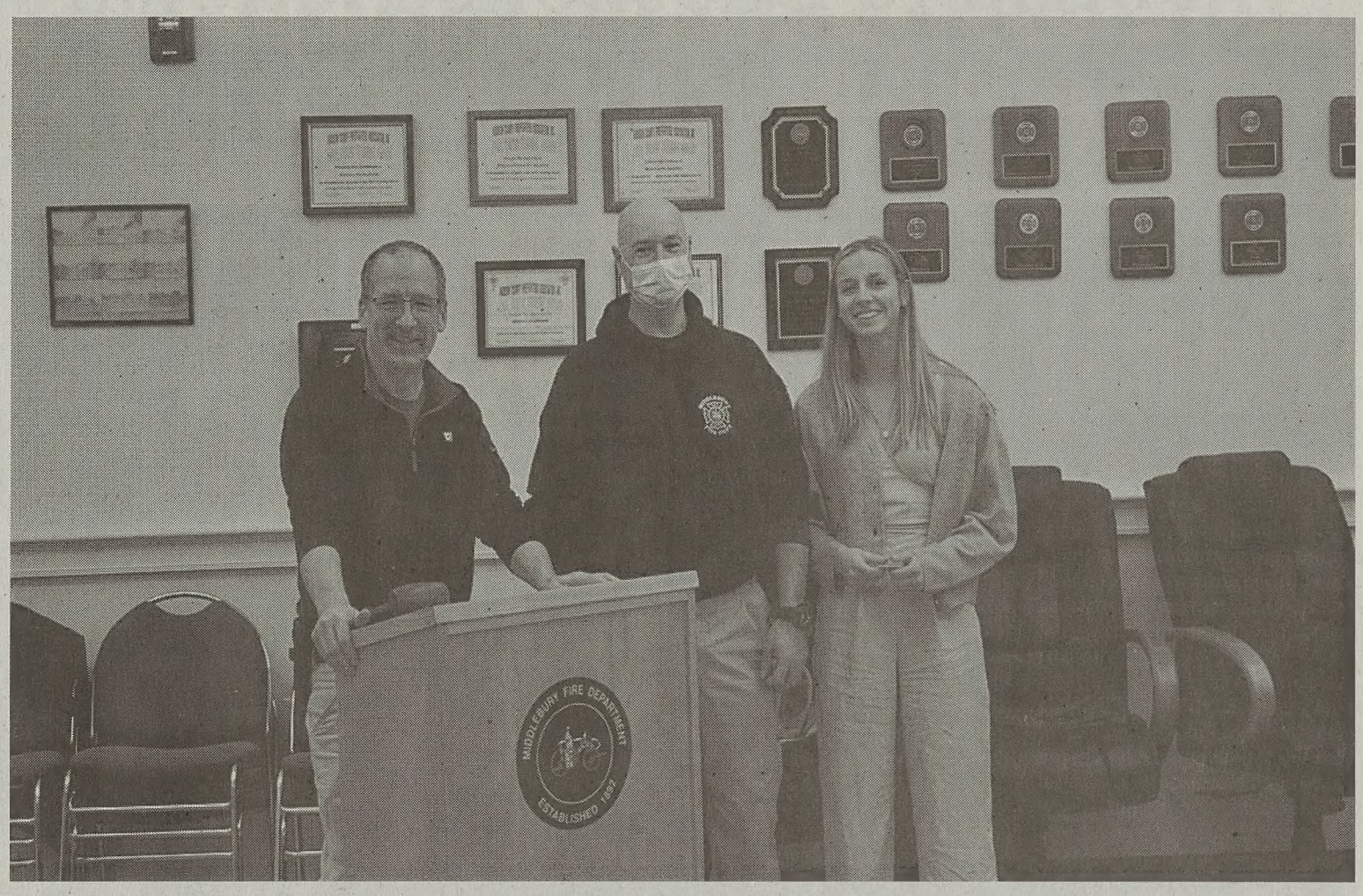
PHOTO OF THE WEEK

A trip to Shoshone National Forest

Photo of the Week by Sophia Johnson '22. Go to go/photooftheweek to submit your own.

THE LIVES OF MIDDLEBURY'S STUDENT FIREFIGHTERS

By BLAISE SIEFER
Senior Sports Editor



COURTESY OF DONALD PATTERSON
Probationary firefighter Emily Jones '23 (right) poses with Chief David Shaw (left) and Mike Bougor (center) at the MFD's annual awards ceremony. Jones, along with five other Middlebury students, are probationary fighters at the Middlebury Fire Department this academic year.

It was an early fall morning, around 2:30 or 3:00 a.m., when the tones of a pager awoke Emily Jones '23.

A car was burning next to a trailer in Middlebury. Firefighters were needed.

In her moonlit room, Jones spurred into action. She jumped out of her dorm bed, threw on a warm set of clothes, and buckled her bike helmet. She exited Starr Hall, climbed on her bike and raced to the station.

Jones arrived in time to make the first engine, riding aboard alongside other volunteer firefighters as they headed to the scene. There was no time to yawn.

By the time Jones and the other firefighters had finished extinguishing the fire and returned to the station, the sun was gently rising over the Green Mountains. Jones pedaled back to campus, tired and sweaty from her efforts, desperate to get a few more hours of sleep before class later in the morning.

This academic year, Jones is one of six Middlebury students who are probationary firefighters at the Middlebury Fire Department (MFD). These students are on call 24/7 for the entire academic year, working alongside about 30 other volunteers at the station. But what does this commitment actually look like? Why do students volunteer at MFD? And what do they get out of the experience?

Recruitment and commitments

The relationship between MFD and the college dates back to 1988, when Dillon Dimick '92 joined the department as a probationary firefighter. Since then, 34 other students have volunteered at the department, with six students currently in the process of becoming full-time members: Emily Jones '23, Ben Arriola '23, AJ Rossbach '23.5, Luke Van Horn '23.5, Eli DiBari '24 and Conrad Kang '24.5.

Student recruitment is a thorough process. When students express interest in volunteering, whether via the department's website or at the student activities fair, they are asked to complete an application and are vetted by the department. The number of student volunteers is limited to seven — the department doesn't want a big void in membership when students graduate — so spots are competitive.

"We want to make sure they really fit with us," MFD Chief David Shaw told The Campus. "We don't have time for people who think this is really cool but don't want to actually do anything. For us, it's not a game, it's a business, we're providing public safety to taxpayers who pay a lot of money."

Shaw added that the department specifically seeks type-A personalities. They want eager, action-oriented students who have a passion for service. "When you look at the [six Middlebury students] we have now, the common theme is, 'What can we do to help out?' It's about service before self," Shaw added.

Once students successfully navigate the recruitment process, they enroll in the mandatory Firefighter One certification course, which teaches the necessary skills of being an interior firefighter, the type of firefighter that enters buildings.. The course is rigorous, spanning about 200 hours in length, beginning in September and ending in May.

Outside of lectures, students take exams, attend departmental meetings and complete training sessions at Middlebury's station and at the Vermont Fire Academy in Pittsford. In a given week, students may have a departmental meeting on Wednesday, Firefighter One class on Thursday night and a day-long training session in Pittsford on Saturday.

"It's a wicked, rugged grind for students," Chief Shaw said. "They learn all the basics of firefighting when they graduate."

There is also an emphasis on hands-on experience for student firefighters, who are given a pager and encouraged to assist with calls when they can. MFD responds to about 200 calls a year, including house fires, car accidents and hazardous material incidents.

Chief Shaw acknowledged the significant commitment for probationary firefighters, noting that academics take priority.

"The number one reason they're in Middlebury is because they're college students. Their goal and their parents' goal is for them to have a degree when they leave — and that's our goal, as well," he said. "We as a fire department don't want to compromise this. We're always asking them how class is going. If you have a test or final, that's where you should be."

By late May, probationary members conclude their training with final written and practical tests. If they pass, they are officially interior firefighters and receive a ceremonial introduction to the department.

Finding a community, learning new skills

While some students find their niche at the college, whether that be a varsity team, a club, or a special interest group, others may long for a different experience. The fire department is unlike any student organization on campus, differing in its demographic, activities and expectations.

Jeff Carpenter, the chair of the Economics department at Middlebury and a captain at MFD since 2017, said that some students are drawn to firefighting because it's a change of pace from student organizations.

"There is no flaking out... there are consequences at the firehouse that aren't on the hill," Carpenter said. "There are no excuses, no 'I'll do it later.' Taking this class makes you even more cognizant about time management."

Working for MFD can also strengthen a students' connection to the town. When responding to calls and interacting with other volunteer firefighters, students are introduced to community members that they might otherwise never meet. "A common theme is that students wanted to get off the ill and experience what a small town in Vermont is really like," Chief Shaw said.

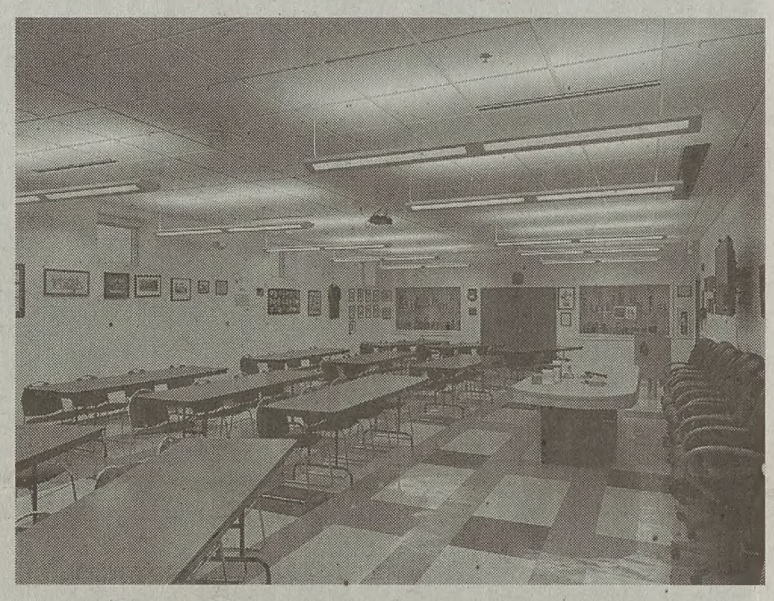
Jones has now been volunteering at MFD since September and has already felt a heightened connection to the community.

"Joining fire was about committing myself to something that felt larger than Middlebury and this campus — and I think it's done that for me in a huge way," Jones said. "It's an enormous privilege to know Middlebury as I know it now. That feels really important to me."

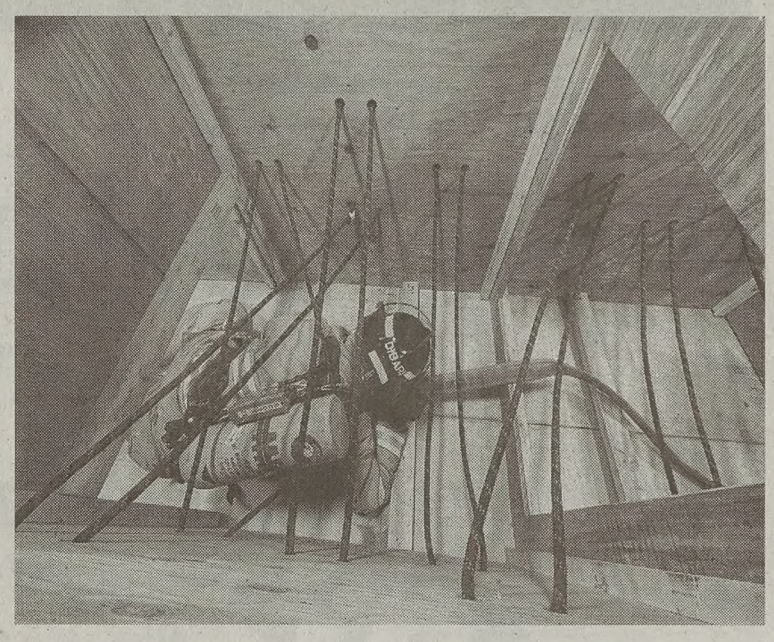
Eli DiBari '24, one of the probationary firefighters, echoed this sentiment.

"It's cool to work with people who have lived in Middlebury their whole lives and really enjoy the service," DiBari said. "It's also a unique opportunity to connect to the community that most students don't have."

Carpenter added that the student firefighters bring unique personalities to the department. "For us, it's nice to have the young blood, too. They keep us young. They're fun to be around," he said.



MFD's classroom, where firefighters attend classes and departmental meetings.



COURTESY PHOTO
Eli DiBari '24 completes search and rescue training during a Firefighter One exercise at the Vermont Fire Academy on Saturday, March 26.

Last but not least, working as a firefighter gives students the chance to learn skills that might not be taught in a classroom at Middlebury.

"Working as a firefighter has taught me a lot of real-life skills that transcend firefighting," DiBari said. "Knot-tying, dynamics of fire, building construction — cool things that round out my greater knowledge of the real world. Everyone who works at the fire department at Middlebury has a wide range of interests and skills and I find myself learning things from them constantly."

Mutually beneficial relationship

Having a partnership with the college makes MFD unique when compared to other fire departments. Chief Shaw noted that there are countless benefits to this distinctiveness. For instance, student firefighters are always asking questions, often sparking change and innovation at the station.

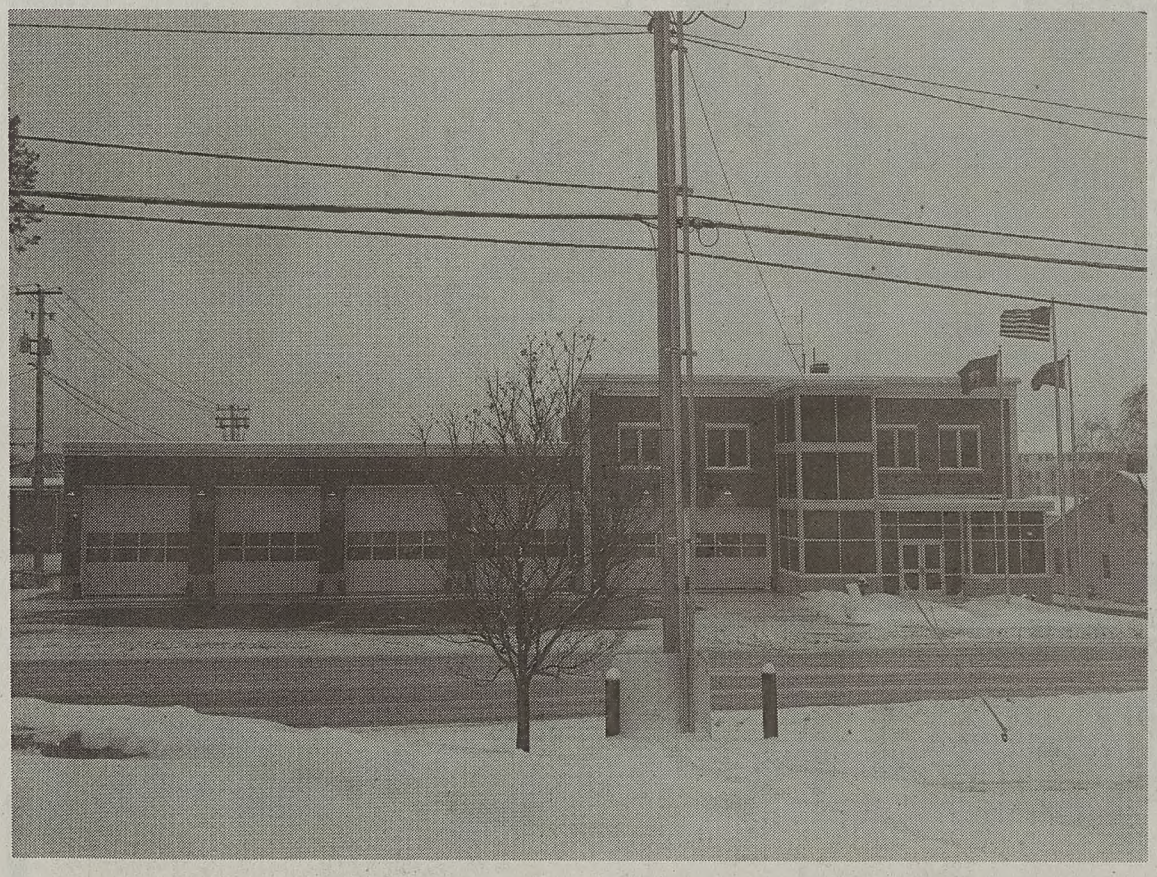
"Every once in a while, we wonder, 'Well why do we do this?' They challenge the way we do business, and by challenging us, it makes us a better department," Shaw said.

For many student probationary firefighters, this commitment is the first of many in the world of public service. Chief Shaw has a certain pride in the number of former students who have gone on to pursue a career in firefighting after MFD. Alex Browne '18, who became a firefighter in Colorado after graduating from Middlebury, is one example.

Above all, there is an emphasis on family at MFD. Students and locals are brought together in a novel way, strengthening the college-town relationship. And even when student firefighters graduate, these relationships persist.

"Fire service is really about family; it's an old cliché, but it's 100% true," Chief Shaw said. "You really make connections with members, so it's not just walking away. We've put roofs on members' houses, we've gone to college graduations. I've met more college parents and made more long term relationships with college students through this program than I could ever imagine."

Emily Jones '23 is a sports editor for The Campus.



COURTESY PHOTO
Middlebury Fire Department Station 1 is located on Seymour Street in downtown Middlebury. Station 2 (not pictured) is in East Middlebury.

V Smiley Preserves finds a permanent home in Minifactory

By OLIVIA MUELLER
Arts & Culture Editor

This past weekend marked the long-awaited opening of Minifactory, the location of V Smiley Preserves, an award-winning jam business. The business, located at 16 Main Street in Bristol, Vermont, also includes a coffee shop and eatery.

The name "Minifactory" was influenced by several factors, including the small batch production method of V Smiley Preserves that will occur in the shop. Smiley originally founded her preserve-making business in Seattle in 2012 before moving back to Vermont and her childhood farm. Smiley's preserves are unique, made with honey, not sugar, unlike many other jams. The honey, fruit, aromatics and other ingredients in the preserves are locally sourced, both from Smiley's own farm and others nearby.

Minifactory hosted an open house on Sunday, March 20, welcoming Vermonters into an airy, revamped space that was formerly the home of Bristol Cliffs Café. After the open house, the following weekend marked the official opening.

"Opening week has been intense and positive. People have filled the space every day we are open," Smiley said in an email to The Campus. Filling in a long-standing community cafe space is no small feat, but Minifactory manages to provide a community-oriented cafe environment while simultaneously staying true to its own uniquely jam-focused concept. Pops of pink near the counter and cheerful yellow chairs combine to give the space a fresh, welcoming ambiance.

> "Opening week has been intense and positive. People have filled the space every day we are open."

"I wanted to diminish the barrier between front and back of house and give folks as much visual access to our manufacturing as possible while they sip and eat," Smiley said. On the day of the open house, there was complimentary coffee and tea on tap, sourced from Brio Coffeeworks.

Opening day brought a bustling crowd of all ages investigating the new space. College students, local families with young children and older couples alike relaxed in the seating area and perused the shelves of available goods. At one point in the morning, every table and chair in the café space was completely full as customers lingered and chatted over coffee and biscuits.

The open house menu was concise but well-executed and consisted of a variety of pastries and light breakfast fare, including warm biscuits served with V Smiley raspberry jam or marmalade. Poached pears with yogurt were also on the menu with produce and goods from other Vermont small businesses also available for purchase.

"It makes me so happy to see folks taking home bags of spinach and local carrots with their cappuccinos, Nicolette English Muffins and jam," said Smiley.

Minifactory was originally hoping to open up in Vergennes, Vt., but rising construction costs during the pandemic meant that even with crowd-funding and broad community support, it was necessary to find another location. "The greatest triumph of opening Minifactory has been the community," said Smiley. Indeed community members rallied to help remodel and revamp the Bristol space. However, the biggest obstacle thus far has been navigating finances and hiring the staff to match the strong support for the space. At the moment, Minifactory is currently still looking for additional kitchen staff and an operations manager to ease the strain on the kitchen and food production.

When fully up and running, Minifactory will be open Friday through Tuesday as an all-day café. Additional events will include dinner service on Friday and Saturdays, a monthly Sunday Community Supper, and a "Veg Sesh" inspired by Meatless Mondays. Minifactory is already bringing the community and buzz back to the space at 16 Main Street, and there's much more room for Minifactory to grow.

Local businesses lift mask requirements as state recommendations relax

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Contributing Writer

Since the state of Vermont ended its mask recommendation on March 14, Middlebury businesses have followed suit. Now, customers can enter nearly every business and building in town maskless.

Ilsley Public Library, located on Middlebury's main street, lifted their mask requirement for patrons over two weeks ago when the statewide mask recommendation ended. However, masks are still required for library employees working at the front desk because they interact heavily with the public.

"There was a little bit of fuss when we originally dropped the mandate. I think some people wanted to keep it required for a while longer, but other than that people have been really flexible," said Ilsley Public Library Circulation Desk Librarian Hayley Coble.

When they did have a mask requirement at the public library, sometimes patrons would remove their masks when in areas of the library where few staff were present. However, if asked, they were often compliant in putting their masks back on, according to Coble. She said that a few people have left when asked to wear a mask when they had that requirement, but it generally has not been an issue trying to get people to wear them.

The Middlebury Natural Foods Co-Op announced last Wednesday that, starting Saturday, March 26, they would no longer require customers or employees to wear masks inside the store. They wanted to give their customers a heads up about the upcoming change. Glenn Lower, general manager of the Co-Op, emphasized that the business's approach to Covid-19 policies is to follow what local and national requirements dictate.

"It's not up to my discretion... we're going to follow what the Vermont governor says, the Vermont Health Department and the CDC," Lower said.

The Co-Op was not quick to remove their mask mandate, even when the state allowed it. Lower explained that even when Addison County's Covid-19 alert level went from high to medium a couple of weeks ago, the Co-Op chose to keep their mask requirement for a little longer to make sure the spread of Covid-19 did not become concerning yet again. Lower emphasized his hope that they would not have to quickly reinstate their mask mandate, and sais that going back and forth with guidelines could be difficult to enforce.

Coble started working at the public library in July, when they reopened to the public. Masks were not required at the library in the summer or early fall, but with the rise of the omicron variant they began requiring patrons to wear a mask. Similarly, the Co-Op did not require masks inside the store during the summer of 2021. Other than those couple of months, they have required masks for the entirety of the pandemic.

According to Lower, customer responses to the masking requirement at the Co-Op over the last two years have been all over the place, and there have been a few customers who have decided not to shop at the Co-Op anymore because of the former mask requirement. But Lower said the general consensus is that customers have often been very accommodating of the Co-Op's mask mandate.

"The vast majority have been very understanding and very accepting," Lower said.

Lower recalled how much things have changed since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic with regard to customer mask requirements in their store. At first, the short supply of medical masks limited the store's ability to provide them for customers. This, in turn, led to the mass creation of reusable cloth masks.

"People started sewing their own masks, and people were donating them to staff," Lower said, pointing out that the mask around his neck was one of those sewn and donated by a community member two years ago.

While some things have returned to normal — for example, the public library's capacity limits are back at pre-pandemic levels, although they still have air purifiers running inside — the possibility of case numbers rising and restrictions returning now seems inherent to living with Covid-19.

"I think it's beginning to wear on people, but people realize the necessity for masking when the transmission rates are up," Coble said.

Courtesy Photos

The interior of Minifactory, a new Bristol business and eatery that opened this past weekend.

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

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Tuition hikes necessitate institutional transparency

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Last week, Middlebury announced a 4.5% tuition increase for the 2022–23 school year, bringing the total price tag to $79,800. This is a significant increase compared to last year's 2.5% increase and increases in previous years that hovered around 3%.

Tuition increases are not new or unexpected. However, we demand that this price tag be accompanied by comprehensive, accessible information regarding exactly how this money will be used. If Middlebury expects students to pay more, it makes sense that we as students can expect to know where our money is going.

This sentiment was expressed by the Middlebury Open the Books Campaign, which surfaced last spring. They wrote in an op-ed for The Campus that "the details of what gets funded — in terms of not only individual salaries but also departments and programs, stock investments and even clubs or student programming — are necessary to reach a community-driven, ethically sound future."

Though Middlebury releases their financial statements as the bare minimum of what is legally required of them as a 501(c)(3), this information is utterly unintelligible to anyone without an accounting degree. Likewise, these numbers do not disclose how the budget is distributed.

> If Middlebury expects students to pay more, it makes sense that we as students can expect to know where our money is going.

It is important to note that the college notified parents but did not explicitly update students about the 4.5% increase. We as a board feel that this is a critical oversight that neglects how this increase will affect students and implies that parents are the sole providers of tuition for students — a situation that is not necessarily true for all Middlebury students. This is especially pertinent in regards to financial aid. Middlebury provides financial aid packages that are intended to make up the gap between tuition and estimated family contribution — the amount that you and your family is expected to be able to pay for tuition. While it is true that the estimated family contribution does not change when tuition increases, such increases can have other effects on students. For example, financial aid packages include a combination of loans, grants, and work-study, and only one component — grants — are monies which students do not have to pay back or work for. As the financial aid package increases as tuition increases, the amount of loans or work-study will also likely increase, which could increase the financial burden of Middlebury tuition. Estimated family contribution is also a calculation that may not reflect the actual capacity of a family to pay each year; for example, the calculation tends to assume that one or both parents are willing to pay tuition. In these cases, tuition increases can still have tangible effects on students and families.

Beyond transparency, we hope that the college's financial priorities following a tuition increase will reflect the needs of all members of the college community — such as committing to and implementing competitive compensation for employees and supporting equity and inclusion on campus. For example, we know that some peer institutions in the NESCAC have eliminated loans from their financial aid packages.

Ultimately, it's understandable that students — present and future — would be taken aback and frustrated by a nearly eighty-thousand dollar sticker price that will almost certainly continue to spike. The bare minimum Middlebury can do is to be transparent about what they're doing with it.

SABRINA TEMPLETON

(Re)write

A new column for historically marginalized members of the Middlebury community

Notes from the Desk

Daleelah Saleh '23 is the Senior Opinions Editor for The Middlebury Campus.

Hey, Midd! As a quick introduction, my name is Daleelah. I'm a junior Posse Scholar from New York. I exist at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities: I'm Muslim, Arab-American, from a low-income background, neurodivergent and a woman of color. These various facets of my identity have not only shaped who I am, but shape the way I exist within the spaces and communities I inhabit at Midd.

As the Senior Editor of the Opinions section, I'm excited to extend the platform of The Campus as a physical and digital space for other historically marginalized members of the Middlebury community to share their experiences. One way I'm hoping to do this is through the creation of a new column, "(Re)write." This title refers to the idea that dominant narratives portrayed in media— including newspapers —are shaped by people in power/with privilege. At Midd, that might look like white people, those with higher income brackets, those in positions of authority, etc. (It's worth noting here that having privilege in some capacity can exist simultaneously with being marginalized in other capacities.) And it's been that way for so long that it's become normative, to the point where you might not even think to consider what voices are missing.

I envision this column as an opportunity for historically marginalized people to (re)write their stories, both by countering dominant narratives and creating entirely new ones.

As a first year especially, I struggled with imposter syndrome because of my various identities. I felt like I had to prove myself — prove that I deserved to be at an elite institution like Midd by being a "good student," prove that I deserved to be a Posse scholar by being a "good leader," prove that I fit into various social circles or student orgs by being a "good friend and team player." Something I learned in my Ed Studies class recently, however, is that "goodness," like most other things we're taught to strive for, is inherently linked to whiteness (and other privileged markers of identity).

So consider this your PSA that you don't have to be a "good writer" or have a "good idea" in order to publish something here. Your voice and experiences are worthy of being amplified and uplifted simply because they are yours. I totally understand that writing for The Campus might feel inaccessible for a variety of reasons, maybe because it seems like a big time commitment or you're worried that you need certain qualifications. You may also not know who to reach out to about it, or you may have an idea but are worried about formulating it into an article. Maybe you don't even know what an "op-ed" is. And that's okay! I'm here to assure you that the commitment is flexible, no qualifications are needed, and our team is here to help you with all aspects of the writing process. (And PSA: an op-ed is an article, often written in the first person, that conveys an opinion or has a central argument.)

I began to write articles for The Campus because I noticed a representation gap in terms of whose experiences were being highlighted and which kinds of people were sending in op-eds. Not every article I've written has revolved around my identity and the struggles I've faced — and I don't want you to feel like your op-eds have to revolve around that, either. Everything I've written, however, has been through the unique lens that only I can offer because of the combination of my identities and life experiences.

Simply put, your voice matters. So this is your invitation to grab the (metaphorical) mic and write something. Write about a topic you're passionate about, an issue you'd like to bring attention to, actions you'd like the administration or fellow members of the community to consider, lessons you wish you learned sooner or wisdom you'd like to pass on, something or someone you love and why, experiences you've had (both positive and negative) . . . . the list goes on! As long as you have a general point you're making, the options are pretty much limitless. If you don't have a good thesis or feel overwhelmed about where to start, reach out anyways. There are multiple Opinion Editors and a super awesome executive team who can help you flesh out your ideas and create a polished piece that you're proud of.

Reach out to dsaleh@middlebury.edu if this sounds like something you're interested in. This column is open to all historically marginalized members of the Middlebury community — students, faculty, staff, and anyone in between. I can't wait to hear from you.

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The Middlebury Campus

What our response to Ukraine tells us about "us"

Middlebury's (and America's) rapid and genuine humanitarian response to Putin's aggression is admirable–and incomparable, in relation to other crises outside of Europe. It's worth thinking about.

Op-Ed

***Connor Wertz** is a member of the class of 2022*

I, like the Middlebury community at large, join in an unequivocal condemnation of Russia's aggression on Ukraine, whose violation of international sovereignty has precipitated the fastest-growing refugee crisis since WWII in Europe. I have had many conversations with friends and family expressing feelings of despair, hopelessness, anger, anxiety and loss; there is no doubt that we as students and as a campus community are living, yet again, through another tragic moment in history.

Throughout the past month, however, I have felt an underlying discomfort with the discrepancy between the breadth and depth of responses to Ukraine's refugee crisis in comparison to other crises – both chronic and acute — that have occurred in places more unfamiliar and foreign to the American imagination than Ukraine. And I think it's worth a conversation — whatever your initial reaction may be.

> Whose way of life, when threatened with destruction, becomes a threat to our way of life? Who counts as "we"?

The outpouring of calls for solidarity with Ukraine have been a heart-warming and hope-inducing response. Important declarations have come from the administration, the SGA and academic departments. Even more encouragingly, these declarations have been followed with action. Governor Phil Scott signed a bill to donate nearly $645,000 of humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine (that totals $1 for every Vermonter plus $1,749, or the sum of Russian-sourced products from the start of the invasion to when Vermont took Russian Vodka off its shelves). There has been an outpouring of donations, including creative demonstrations of support, like when over 60,000 well-meaning Air-BnB users booked stays in Ukraine (without actually planning on going) in a quirky and innovative transnational act of mutual aid.

> It's worth taking a mirror to ourselves as an institution, a community, and as individuals to see what we can learn about who "we" are.

Supporting Ukraine has become a dinner table (or dining hall) discussion with students, on par with — and perhaps even more frequently than — rising inflation, sky-rocketing gas prices and confirmation hearings for the first Black woman to join the Supreme Court. It has, quite literally, become a bake-sale type issue; donation boxes are popping up and Middlebury's American Flatbread is donating $3 to the cause for every pizza they bake on Thursdays for the next month. Solidarity for Ukraine has woven itself into the cultural fabric of America in 2022 — not just in the news cycles or the geopolitical history books but in the daily reproductions of our lives.

Yet I can't help but think about the many other crises across the globe, from the collapse of democracy in Myanmar to the refugee crisis in Syria to the rise of autocracy in Venezuela, that in their own way deserved an American reckoning — a reckoning that largely never happened. I believe that this discrepancy reveals how "we" (as Americans, and Middlebury-ians, as humans in the Western world) perceive ourselves — and dole out sympathy and support accordingly.

Whose way of life, when threatened with destruction, becomes a threat to our way of life? Who counts as "we"?

It seems clear right now that Ukraine, as a European country — and, perhaps more importantly, as a country who has indicated intent to join NATO and withdraw from the Russian sphere of influence — is part of the "we.

Other countries and populations with cultural practices, religions, and ways of life less familiar to the dominant, white culture and media narrative of the U.S. that have experienced humanitarian crises of great magnitude are not as included in that same "we."

It's not just me that has noticed this; journalists and humanitarian aid workers who have spent careers covering crises such as the Syrian refugee crisis have spoken out, with a passion and anger born from experience. Take Arwa Damon, an award winning senior international correspondent for CNN, who writes, "Today it feels like the world has woken up and finally realized how ruthless and murderous the Russian government is. As if for years Syrians were not dying under the same Russian bombs . . . I hear it in the rhetoric coming out of from [sic] politicians, journalists and global leaders. Rhetoric about how Ukrainians are a 'prosperous middle-class people,' 'the family next door,' 'civilized.' As if what is defined as a human worth saving is identified by the color of their skin, the language they speak, the religion they practice or where they were born."

> We live predominantly within a framework of scarcity... I believe that doesnt have to be the answer.

I will admit this piece is an uncomfortable thing to write. I don't want to turn a people's suffering into an example of the anti-racist and anti-xenophobic work we still have to accomplish. I'm afraid that the commentary will be received as polarizing — that people will feel personally criticized, that this will be read as "you'll never do enough," that we won't be able to sit with the ambiguity of the situation.

Perhaps that's because we live predominantly within a framework of scarcity — a framework which tells us that by advocating for increased support of country x, country y will inevitably receive less help. I believe that doesn't have to be the answer.

This is not to trivialize the acute humanitarian suffering that is happening right now, nor to suggest that we need to shift our resources away from Ukraine in order to help other populations. It is true that Putin's blatant violation of international sovereignty is unique, and that the speed and acuteness with which we are seeing this exodus and violence is shocking.

But human suffering knows no borders. War crimes against another country and war crimes within your borders are still war crimes; "internal displacement" is still displacement. The more than 3.6 million Ukranians that have fled the war's violence now join the 84 million people already forcibly displaced from their homes as of mid-2021.

Ukraine has been on everybody's mind. It's worth taking a mirror to ourselves as an institution, a community and individuals to see what we can learn about who "we" are. We can strive to hold the nuance of the situation, to celebrate the solidarity expressed for Ukraine and deepen our awareness of how we can support the global community as a whole.

> The more than 3.6 million Ukranians that have fled the war's violence now join the 84 million people already forcibly displaced from their homes as of mid-2021.

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Arabic Reflections with Maryait: Inshallah

إِنْشَاءَ اللَّه

Column

Maryait Khader is the Teaching Assistant in Arabic.

After more than six months for me at Middlebury, I miss many things in Jordan. When I say Jordan, I mean the Arab countries in general, which share many customs and habits.

I decided to turn this longing for home into a door through which I might open the opportunity to pass on a part of my culture to those who might be interested. This is the main reason I am here.

In this weekly column, I will try to present famous Arabic phrases and describe their meanings and the ways in which they are commonly used.

I will start with "Inshallah", a phrase about which I can certainly say many people in the Arab world will not have a day without using a couple times.

Literally translated, it means "if God wills." As for its cultural and semantic definition, it may mean two things. The first: "certainly" and the second: "that will never happen." This depends on your luck with the person who uses it, his honesty and the context in general.

If you were walking in a street in Jordan, saw a friend by chance and asked them to have dinner with you, they might say "Inshallah". This could mean one of two things. If he did not add any other details then this most likely

In this weekly column, I will try to present famous Arabic phrases and describe their meanings and the ways in which they are commonly used.

means it will never happen. If instead he says, "Inshallah," and he follows it with, "sure, at 6 p.m.?" then of course, he is serious.

It is also a phrase found in some languages that were influenced by Arabic, such as the Spanish phrase "Ohala" or "Ojalla".

Despite these differences in the meaning of "Inshallah", it is a very important phrase in the Arab world, and I hope that people will use it in the second, more positive way.

بعد أكثر من ٦ شهور على وجودي في ميدلبري، أمور كثيرة افتقدها في الأردن، وعندما أقول الأردن لا أعنيه بالتحديد، بل أعني البلاد العربية بشكل عام التي تشترك بالكثير من العادات.

وقررت تحويل هذا الشوق إلى باب أفتح من خلاله الفرصة لنقل جزء من ثقافتي، إذ إنّ هذا السبب الرئيسي لوجودي هنا.

سأحاول في هذه الزاوية الأسبوعية تقديم عبارات عربية مشهورة، وألحقها بسياقات الاستخدام.

سأبدأ مع عبارة إن شاء الله التي من الممكن أن أقول بفم مليء أنّ يوماً لن يمرّ على الكثيرين في الوطن العربي دون استخدامها...

والتي تعني لغوياً أنّ حصول هذا الأمر من عدم حصوله مرتبط بإرادة الله، أما ثقافياً فقد تعني أمرين أولهما: بالتأكيد، والآخر: هذا لن يحصل أبداً، وهذا يعتمد على حظك مع الشخص الذي يستخدمها ومدى صدقه، والسياق بشكل عام.

فإذا كنت في شارع في الأردن ورأيت صديقاً بالصدفة، وأخبرته لنتناول العشاء سوياً وقال: إنْ شاء الله ومضى، فهذا يعني الخيار الثاني، أما إذا قال إن شاء الله وألحقها، بالتأكيد الساعة ٦ مساء في مطعم هاشم (أحد مطاعم عمّان المشهورة)؟ فبالطبع إنه جاد.

كما أنها عبارة موجودة في بعض اللغات التي نقلت لها من العربية مثل العبارة الإسبانية أوهالا أو أوجالله.

A call to action, a call for process

Abenaki land repatriation and Middlebury

Op-Ed

Josie Bourne is a member of the class of 2021.5

Middlebury College has existed on unceded Abenaki lands for the past 222 years. Following recent conversations about decolonizing curricula and the renaming of the Middlebury Chapel, there arises the question of land repatriation. Upon recognizing the moral imperative of repatriation, the question becomes not if, but how.

In writing this op-ed, I recognize my identity as a white settler colonist and cannot speak on behalf of Native people. I instead seek to carry forth this conversation begun by many others in the college community, which includes work done by many student activists, the Twilight Project, and the spring 2021 first-year seminar taught about Middlebury College's relationship with the Western Abenaki — so that we as a community begin to seriously consider how to go about repatriating land.

So I pause here to state the question explicitly: What would that future look like? What will it take to transfer back land? How can Middlebury further the process of material decolonization? I wish to invite settler colonists like myself to acknowledge our position, to think about our work on this land and to recognize our institutional power.

Middlebury College has already taken some steps towards redressing past wrongs and establishing a greater connection to local Indigenous people, through actions including the creation of an institution-wide land acknowledgment and the renaming of the college chapel. The Knoll has collaborated with the local Nulhegan Band of the Coosuck-Abenaki on a seed-banking project, a food security initiative and harvest ceremonies. Additionally, Middlebury has worked with the Nulhegan Band to found the Abenaki Language School as part of the Summer Language School programming and establish access to college lands for the collection of plant materials used for food, medicine, and traditional crafts.

A next step is to transfer back land into Indigenous ownership. Transferring land back into Indigenous hands is a critical component of commitment to decolonization, as land is what is most valued and contested under settler colonialism. Without land repatriation, decolonization is rendered a rhetorical device to describe the inclusion of Native knowledge, and ways of knowing, in the dominantly Western scholarly frameworks of this institution. As scholars Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang write, "Decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future."

Middlebury is well positioned to work through the repatriation process especially because the college possesses so much land: Middlebury owns about 6,000 acres of land, approximately half of which lies in the Champlain Valley and half up in the Green Mountains. The Snow Bowl occupies about 800 acres up on the mountain, while the other 2,000 acres in the mountains are conserved forest land. However, there is an easement attached to these 2,000 acres of forest. This arrangement means the Vermont Land Trust owns some of the rights to this land (such as development rights), and these restrictions will exist in perpetuity, regardless of who owns the title.

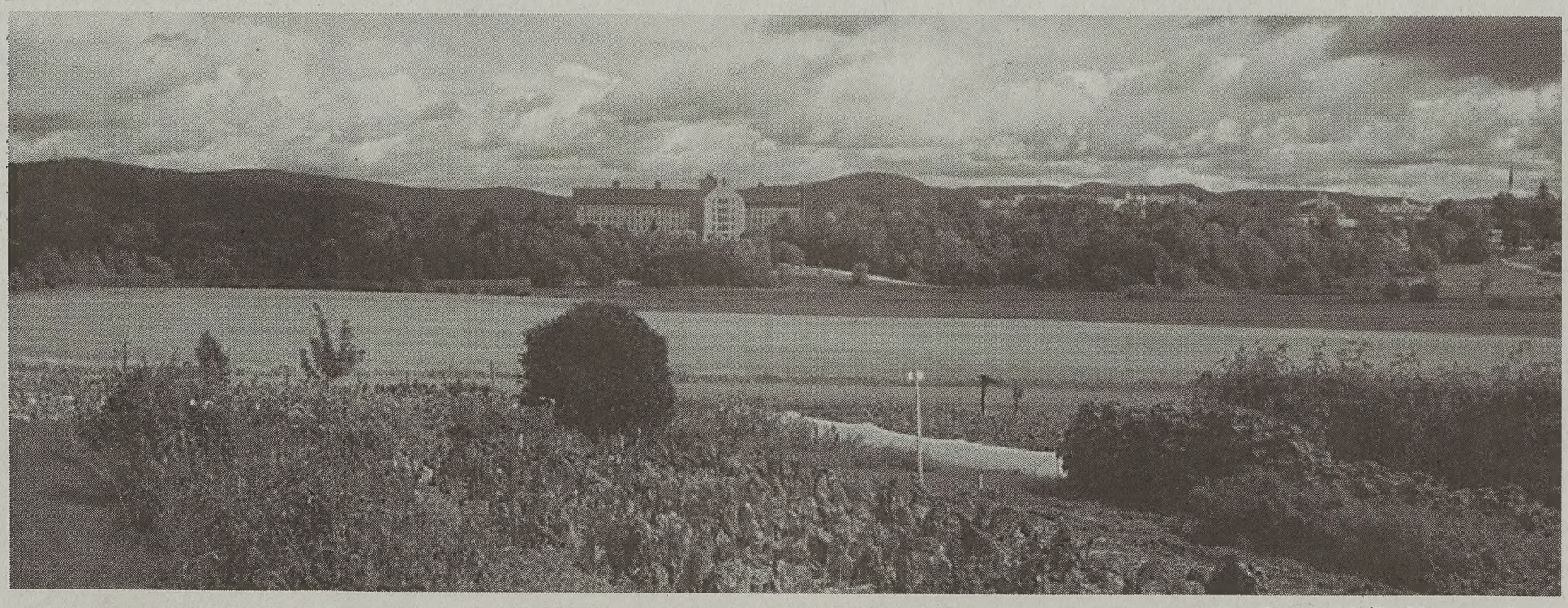
On the other hand, opportunities in the valley could potentially be simpler. Besides the 350 acres the campus occupies, there are several small rocky or wet forest patches in the valley. Additionally, there are about 1,700 acres of agricultural lands that at present are leased to farmers with five-year leases that do not have the legal restrictions associated with an easement.

Another potential challenge of repatriation could be determining who should receive title to land that multiple tribes and peoples had used since time immemorial. The college has the most established relationship with the Nulhegan Band of the Abenaki, but there are three other state-recognized tribes, the Elnu Abenaki, the Koasek Traditional Band of the Koas Abenaki Nation and the Abenaki Nation at Missisquoi, in addition to unaffiliated Abenaki people within Vermont. Potential disagreements might arise over how and to whom land should be deeded. However, this possibility is not reason enough to not engage in the process.

Furthermore, settler questioning of tribal legitimacy mirrors harmful historical practices requiring performance of indigeneity by Native people, such as blood quantum and federally-issued identification cards proving tribal enrollment. As Chief Don Stevens, leader of the Nulhegan Abenaki Band, said, "The only three things that have to have pedigrees in this country are dogs, horses and Indians. Think about that."

Rather than making decisions on behalf of Indigenous people while also remaining complicit in their dispossession, the college should begin the process of repatriation, starting conversations with Indigenous communities to respect their sovereignty and understand what their vision of an Abenaki decolonized future would be. The process may be politically fraught (as it always would have been), but this reality should not prevent us from actually engaging and figuring out how to navigate the thorniness of land repatriation.

Editor's Note: this piece was produced as part of an independent study over J-term in collaboration with Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Mez Baker-Médard and with input from Associate Laboratory Professor in Environmental Studies Marc Lapin

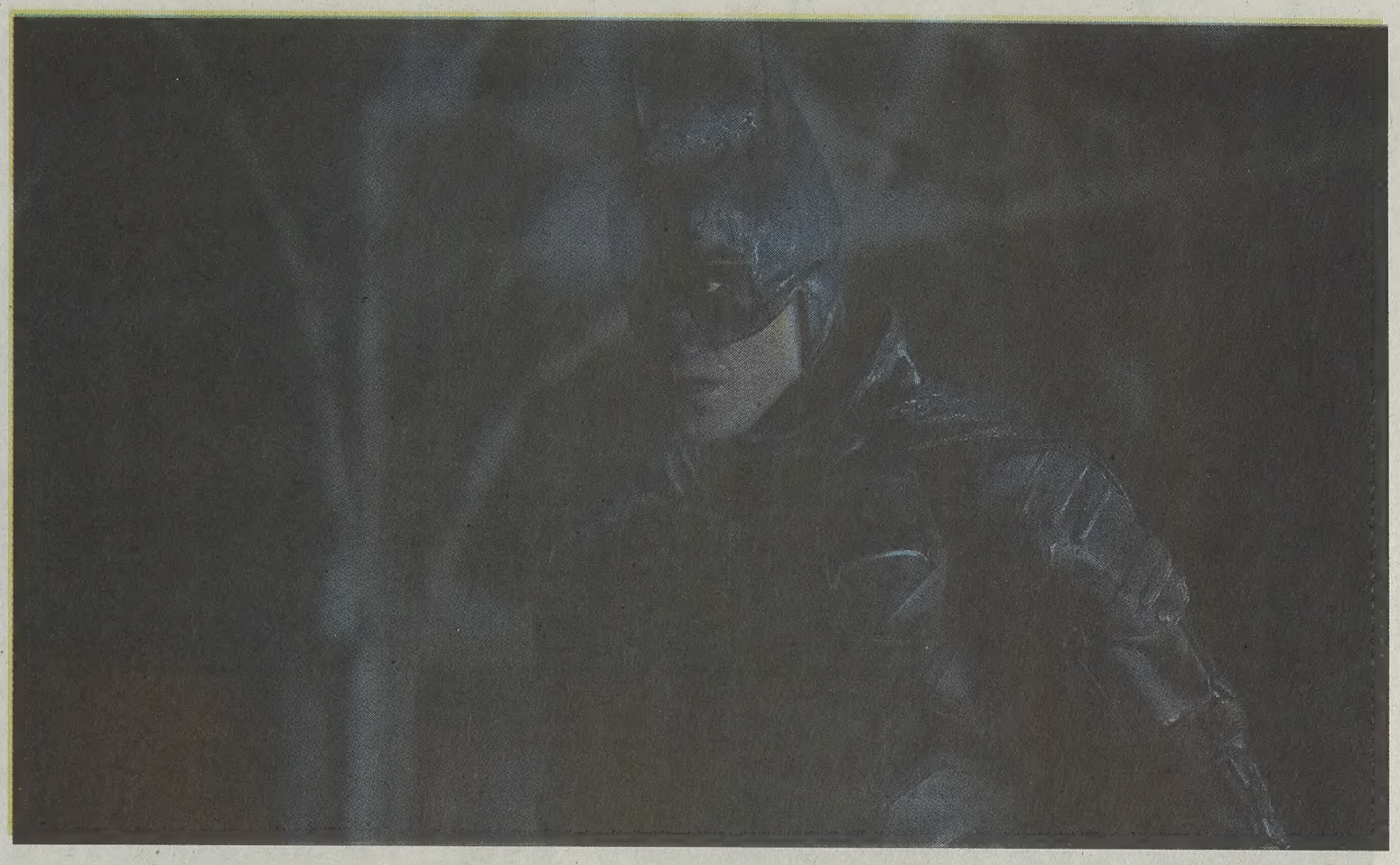


FLORENCE WU/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The organic farm at Middlebury is called the Knoll.

Reel Critic: "The Batman"

By JACK TORPEY
Staff Writer



Courtesy Photo

In the history of American cinema, there are few absolutes. Critics still can't decide whether "Citizen Kane" or "The Godfather" deserves the title of "Greatest American Film," and audiences continue to debate whether "A New Hope" or "The Empire Strikes Back" is the definitive entry in the "Star Wars" saga. Some things, however, are certain. There will never be a better shark movie than "Jaws." No biographical epic will ever surpass "Lawrence of Arabia." And in turn, there will never be a stronger cinematic incarnation of Batman than what director Christopher Nolan achieved in "The Dark Knight" trilogy. Ten years on from "The Dark Knight Rises," the stirring finale to the series that humanized Bruce Wayne and established a Batman for the modern world, director Matt Reeves and star Robert Pattinson have tried their hand at a new iteration of the tortured hero for the big screen. To put it plainly, it comes as close to Nolan's benchmark as another movie about the comic book icon likely ever will. "The Batman" is a captivating showcase for its protagonist. It's a story of corruption, vengeance and ultimately hope that imbues the character with a mythological air as palpable as the rain-soaked alleyways of Gotham City.

Reeves' Gotham is a city rotting from the inside out. Its citizens are terrorized by murderers and rapists, and the police force and public officials meant to protect them have been bought by the mob. In the midst of this moral decay, a masked vigilante known as the Batman (Robert Pattinson) metes out harsh justice on Gotham's criminals, spending each night of the past two years violently subduing those seeking to prey on the innocent. It is onto this dark cityscape that a serial killer calling himself the Riddler (Paul Dano) emerges on Halloween night, murdering the mayor and exposing his illicit connections to the mob. As the Riddler targets more so-called defenders of justice, the Batman must ally with Lieutenant Jim Gordan (Jeffrey Wright) and the cat burglar Selina Kyle (Zoë Kravitz) to bring him down and unearth the deep-rooted legacy of corruption that has plagued Gotham City for generations.

The article in the film's title is not there just for style. Nolan's trilogy emphasized the human element of Batman, focusing more on Bruce Wayne's psychology and emotions than the exploits of his alter ego. What resulted was a sure sense that the armor-clad Batman is a theatrical cloak for the man beneath, Wayne only revealing his true self once he takes off the cowl. Reeves and Pattinson reverse this dynamic. They have created a version of the character that is truly the Batman: an almost inhuman entity that consumes Wayne's entire being. A potent presence emits from the menacing yet majestic figure, instilling awe in the audience and dread in the criminals he torments. This is true even when the character is off-screen. When a burglar rushes out of a storefront with his score, he halts in front of a darkened alleyway. He stares into the blackness, panic overcoming him as he imagines what lurks in the dark, and flees in horror. The Batman was never even there.

The film is littered with scenes just like this that accentuate the mythic status embodied by the Batman. Each one is enhanced by the first-rate technical skill exhibited by Reeves and his crew, who ensure that "The Batman" is a consistently beautiful film to look at and listen to. Cinematographer Greig Fraser revels in the darkness that dominates virtually every corner of the film. His embrace of the low lighting produces the timeless image of the Batman materializing out of a pitch-black corridor during the character's brilliant introduction, while his mastery of color frequently punctures the dark screen with vibrant hues of flare red, fire orange and police siren blue. Accompanying Fraser's pristine photography is Michael Giacchino's gothic, ever-intensifying score. Giacchino apparently understood the treatment that the comic book hero would be getting in this film, for his theme bears more resemblance to John Williams' chilling motif for the shark in "Jaws" than his jubilant march for "Superman." Each time the rumbling strings begin to strum, the church bell begins to knell and the horns begin to blast, it sounds like something bad is coming. For Gotham's criminals and corrupt, that sound rings true.

But there is a section of Giacchino's score that diverges from its predominantly ominous tone. The recurring theme subsides, and a new, hopeful melody swells to a triumphant climax. This glimmer of light in the music of "The Batman" is the key to the thematic contribution the film makes to the broader Batman canon. When the movie begins, Bruce Wayne is embroiled in a seething rage of vengeance, stalking Gotham as the Batman to hunt down evil men just like the one who murdered his parents when he was a child. As he navigates the sprawling noir storyline that Reeves constructs, however, he begins to understand that a force of vengeance is not what the good people of Gotham need. With their streets overrun by criminals and their institutions being dismantled by corruption, he sees that they need him to become a symbol of hope. The nuance of Bruce Wayne's heroism in Nolan's trilogy, the idea that Batman is the hero Gotham deserves but not the one it needs, was always the most transfixing element of the series. Reeves and Pattinson reach for that power in "The Batman." They don't quite seize it, but when the runner you're chasing is as fast as "The Dark Knight," second place becomes a victory unto itself.

'Tis the season: "Bridgerton" season two

Courtesy Photo

By SOPHIA AFSAR-KESHMIRI
Contributing Writer

Editor's Note: This article may contain mild spoilers for seasons one and two of "Bridgerton."

Since the moment the oh-so-bingeable "Bridgerton" came out in December 2020, viewers have been anxiously awaiting season two. Overall, the season is off to a good start. With new and old loves being explored, don't be surprised if you find yourself falling in love with the show all over again. With plenty of drama, jealousies and plot twists, the new episodes have been just as entertaining as the last. While Daphne (Phoebe Dynevor) and Simon's (Regé-Jean Page) story reached a heartwarming resolution at the end of season one, the plots of many other characters were left open. Eloise's (Claudia Jessie) ambitious spirit, Penelope's (Nicola Coughlan) budding business and Anthony's (Jonathan Bailey) tumultuous love life all play a much bigger role in this season. In what, at times, feel like a fantasy fairytale version of "The Bachelor" or "The Bachelorette," with dance cards to be filled and home-visits to be endured, the show excites with its undeniable drama.

If you're looking for a show to draw you in and make you feel like you're at the center of the gossip and drama, "Bridgerton" is the perfect love match. It's funny, emotional and tender — what more is there to ask for? In the always bright and sunny world of "Bridgerton's" London, even at the most intense moments you can't help feeling anything other than enthralled. While sometimes it's nice to be brought to tears by a piece of media, it is just plain fun to escape from the never-ending, freezing-cold and constantly-cloudy Vermont winter to this ridiculously sunny and lavish world. So, if you're looking to remove yourself from reality for an hour or two (or three), "Bridgerton" is sure to offer a moment of much needed respite.

The show owes some of its comfortability to its use of modern music twists. The soundtrack makes the show more approachable for viewers, using classical covers of modern songs like Harry Styles's "Sign of the Times," Miley Cyrus's "Wrecking Ball" or any number of Taylor Swift songs. While immersed in this drastically different world, the music does not add another layer of stark contrast between the character's fictional world and viewers' realities. Rather than distract from the story at large, it fosters an easily approachable environment that invites viewers to feel as though they too are dancing the night away at the Queen's ball.

The only bit of disappointment overshadowing the excitement of the season's arrival was Simon's absence. While the happy life of Simon and Daphne might have been a refreshing break from the internal and external conflicts other characters face, the departure of two of the show's biggest stars was a little upsetting. However, the change in main characters allowed for some of the more minor conflicts from season one to develop further. If you've been left wishing for more on Eloise's dismissal of the marriage process, Lady Whistledown's covert operation or Anthony's love life, get excited for this season.

Despite a slow start in the first two episodes, it only gets harder and harder to exit Netflix. To make the absence of Simon less apparent, his and Daphne's lives do not play a substantial role in the drama of the season. Instead, the focus turns to Anthony and his decision to marry. While initially it felt like the show was starting over in a sense, the shift in storyline was handled seamlessly. The writers and cast crafted the conflicts in Anthony's love life as a continuation from the previous season. As he navigates the marriage season, grieving the loss of his father and a particularly tricky love triangle, his season one antics are quickly forgotten.

While the plot of Anthony's story is unrelated to the storylines of the previous season, Eloise and Penelope's lives of rebellion take new directions as well. The centrality of their characters this season was much needed and much appreciated. After seeing only snippets of their rebellious natures from last season, these two ladies' love matches with academia are worthy enough to be featured in the latest issue of Lady Whistledown's Society Papers.

While last season Lady Bridgerton accompanied Queen Charlotte's then diamond, Daphne, to ball after ball, this season she is dragging quirky Eloise along for the ride. As graceful and eloquently as Daphne managed her marriage season, Eloise manages hers defiantly, pursuing feminism even more fervently than she did last season.

As her best friend shakily begins to balance the world of promenades, balls, activism and grit, Penelope continues to pave a path for herself as anonymous gossip writer Lady Whistledown. While viewers spent last season wondering who this mysterious figure was, this season Penelope's ups and downs keep her audience entertained as she struggles to keep her identity hidden and navigate the business world of 19th century London.

If you're still worried about Simon's absence from the show, never fear: the Sharma's are here! Kate (Simone Ashley) and Edwina (Charithra Chandran) have arrived in London with a mission in mind: to find Edwina a husband. As expected in the fictional world the characters live in, this mission involves much drama and glamor. Kate brings another independent and rebellious figure in the fictional world, and Edwina a reserved and eloquent one. Their characters introduce their own pasts, internal conflicts as well as their corgi, Newton, to their new world, all of which help you forget any initial worries you had for the season. As these two sisters lean on each other throughout the marriage season, their love for one another appears unconditional; but will their bond be broken by the triumphs and failures of the marriage season? Newton, to their new world, all of which help you forget any initial worries you had for the season. As these two sisters lean on each other throughout the marriage season, their love for one another appears unconditional; but will their bond be broken by the triumphs and failures of the marriage season?

PERFECT SEASON

Women's hockey wins sixth national title in dramatic fashion

Ellie Barney '21.5 slots a rebound past Gustavus Adolphus' goalie Katie McCoy to win the 2022 NCAA Championship.

Photo Courtesy of Will Costello

Continued from Page 1

In the final seconds of the game, a scramble began in front of Middlebury's goal, with Molly McHugh of the Gusties finding the loose puck and sliding it home.

For a moment, the Panthers looked incredulous — their perfect season was thrown in jeopardy in the most dramatic of circumstances. But if this year's team has taught fans anything, it's that they play to the very end. Before overtime, Leidt skated over to Merageas, encouraging the rookie goaltender to keep her head up — the game wasn't over yet.

"There were a few teammates coming up to me and saying don't worry, either way it goes we'll get another one," Merageas said. "We're going to come back stronger."

From the onset of overtime, the Panthers looked the hungrier team. Middlebury controlled possession and darted toward every puck, putting immense pressure on the Gusties' back line. And after 13 minutes of overtime play, the Gusties finally cracked.

Eva Hendrikson '22.5 started the play with a deft pass to her fellow captain Ellie Barney '21.5, who controlled the puck and charged into the offensive end. Barney's initial bid at the Gusties goal was blocked, but she reacted quickest to the rebound, firing it past McCoy and into the back of the net.

Barney was soon swarmed by a sea of white and blue. Kenyon Arena's 2,120 fans — the most spectators to ever attend a women's hockey game in the venue — jumped to their feet and sent reverberating cheers around the arena.

> "It's been a special, fun year that I'll remember for the rest of my life."

"You lose the national championship with one-tenth of a second left, and you come out and play your best hockey in overtime," Mandigo said. "They played hard, they got pucks to the net, and I couldn't be happier for this group for everything they've done all year long."

Individual and team accolades

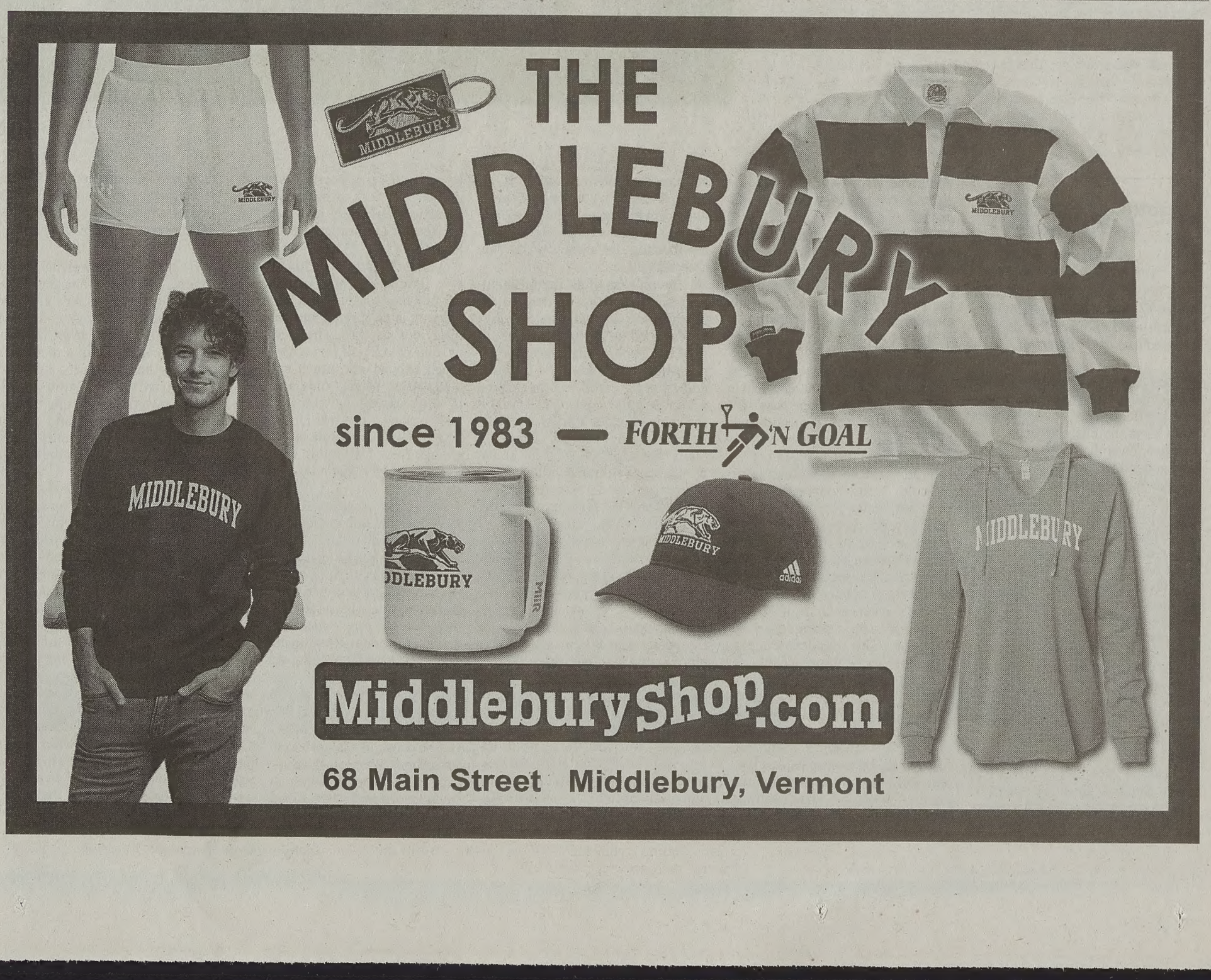
With the win, the Panthers (27–0–0) became the first ever team in Division III women's hockey history to complete an undefeated season, and equaled a Middlebury record for wins in a season. They also tied an NCAA record for home wins with 18 straight in Kenyon Arena.

At the individual level, Letterie, Leidt and Merageas were named to the NCAA All-Tournament Team, with Merageas also taking home Most Outstanding Player honors. The rookie goalie recorded 29 saves in the national championship game, displaying composure beyond her years.

After the game, Bill Mandigo was asked how this year's team ranked among his 33 at Middlebury.

"You've got to put it right there," he said. "This team moves to the top of the list. It's been a special, fun year that I'll remember for the rest of my life."

"The reason the goal counted was because they wanted to play more, they didn't want the season to end," he said.

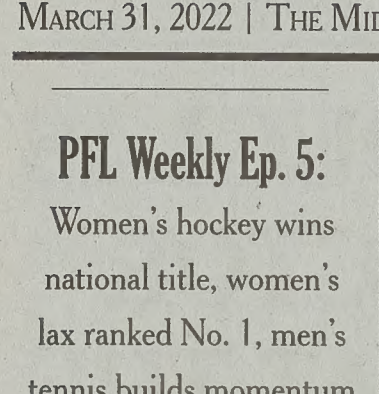


PFL Weekly Ep. 5:

Women's hockey wins national title, women's lax ranked No. 1, men's tennis builds momentum

By BLAISE SIEFER, ELI DIBARI, MARCO FENGLER, CAPTAIN RUDOLPH & CAROLINE HARDING

Undefeated! Women's hockey (27–0–0) completed their perfect season last Saturday with an overtime win in the NCAA final. The PFL Weekly team recaps this historic accomplishment and interviews captain Madie Leidt '22 about the victory. In other news, women's lacrosse was recently ranked No. 1 in Division-III and men's tennis found great success in California on their spring break trip. All of this and more on this episode of PFL Weekly!



Middlebury sports teams travel and compete across country for spring break

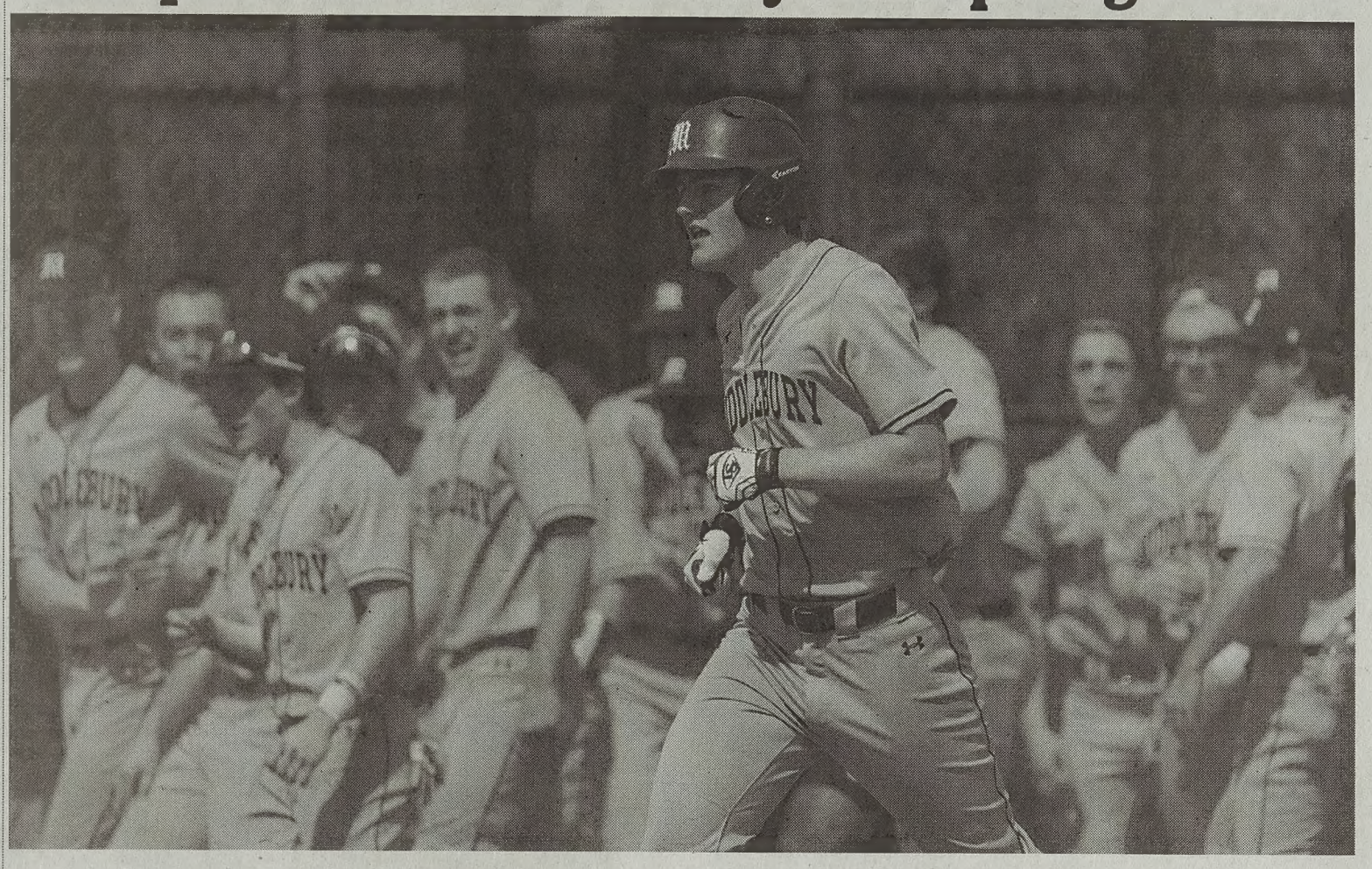


Photo courtesy of Middlebury Athletic Communications

Kyle McCausland '25 was on fire for the men's baseball team last week in Florida, recording 15 RBIs and 3 HR.

By BEN WAGNER
Staff Writer

Open water. Dry grass. Warm weather.

Last week, many of Middlebury's varsity and club teams traveled away from campus to practice and compete throughout spring break.

With the Ralph Myhre Golf Course in Middlebury still closed, the men's golf team traveled to North Carolina to train. Women's golf didn't take an official team trip, but a number of players also headed south for warmer weather and dryer turf to play on.

Club crew also traveled to the Tar Heel State, training at Lake Lure. Men's crew captain Noah Long '22 explained that the spring break trip improves team chemistry and fitness, preparing them for the spring season.

"We row two to three times a day at the very least, starting when the sun rises all the way up until there is no more daylight," Long said. "There is definitely a strong sense of solidarity and togetherness during these first few days."

Nearby, the ultimate frisbee teams competed in the College Southerns Tournament in Statesboro, Georgia. Both teams went unbeaten, with the men's team claiming the victory via a handy 15–6 win over the College of Charleston in the final and the women's team beating Carleton.

The ultimate teams traveled north for the final weekend of break, with the men's team competing in a Virginia tournament, "Rodeo." The Pranksters defeated Richmond, the No. 2 seed in Division-III, in the semifinal before falling to newfound rival St. Olaf's in the final by a single point. The women's side competed in the Needle in a Ho-Stack Tournament in Charlotte, North Carolina, once again going unbeaten and beating a number of highly ranked Division-I teams.

Softball and baseball traveled even further south, spending spring break in Florida. The softball team competed in nine games in Clermont, recording a 5–4 record. Meanwhile, baseball competed in the Russmatt Tournament in Auburndale, going 3–5.

Mike Leonard, the head coach of men's baseball, told The Campus that the team enjoyed good weather and a competitive schedule over spring break. "It's a great opportunity for us to learn and develop as a team," he added.

The women's club water polo team also traveled to Florida, competing against some of the top teams in the region. This trip served as great preparation for the team as they prepare to defend their title as national champions. This tournament will be held in late April in Middlebury.

Other teams opted to head west for spring break. Men's and women's track & field practiced and competed in two meets in San Diego, finding success and several individual personal bests.

Captain Zander Kessler '22.5 set a personal best in the 5k, winning the race and stopping the clock at 14:24.88. Rookie jumper Sam McGarrhan '25 hit a personal record of 1.86 meters on the high jump at the PLNU Collegiate Open meet on Saturday, March 26.

"I'm really excited for the outdoor season," McGarrahan said. "It was nice to get off to a strong start in San Diego and I can't wait for the start of NESCAC competition." McGarrahan will get his first crack at outdoor NESCAC competition on April 9 at Amherst College.

The trip also saw several school records shattered. At the PLNU Collegiate Open, Eva Kaiden '23, Michelle Louie '24, Cady Barns '22.5 and Joely Virzi '24 set the school record in the women's 4x100 meter relay with a blistering time of 48.78 seconds, shaving 0.08 seconds off the previous record. Max Cluss '23 also set the school record in the men's 1,500 meter run at the Ross and Sharon Irwin Collegiate meet on March 19, setting a time of 3:50.65, 0.19 seconds faster than the previous record set in 2019.

Men's and women's tennis also trained and competed in California. Both squads found success against teams from the West Coast, recording a combined 8–4 record. One highlight of the trip was men's tennis' win over the Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Colleges, who ranked No. 3 in Division-III headed into the match. It was also the first time the Panthers have beaten Claremont-Mudd-Scripps in the regular season since 2010.

"That was a great moment," Robby Ward '23, a junior on men's tennis, said. "Our confidence is up for sure, but I keep reminding the guys that we can't let our guard down."

"Spring break is a unique opportunity where we aren't focused on school at all — we're there to play tennis," Ward added. "That was a great opportunity for us to hang out. We're like a family. We are constantly supporting each other."

With all spring sports teams now back on campus, Panther fans can look forward to watching some of their favorite teams competing again on home soil.

Seven Questions with Alexis Ballo '25, men's squash

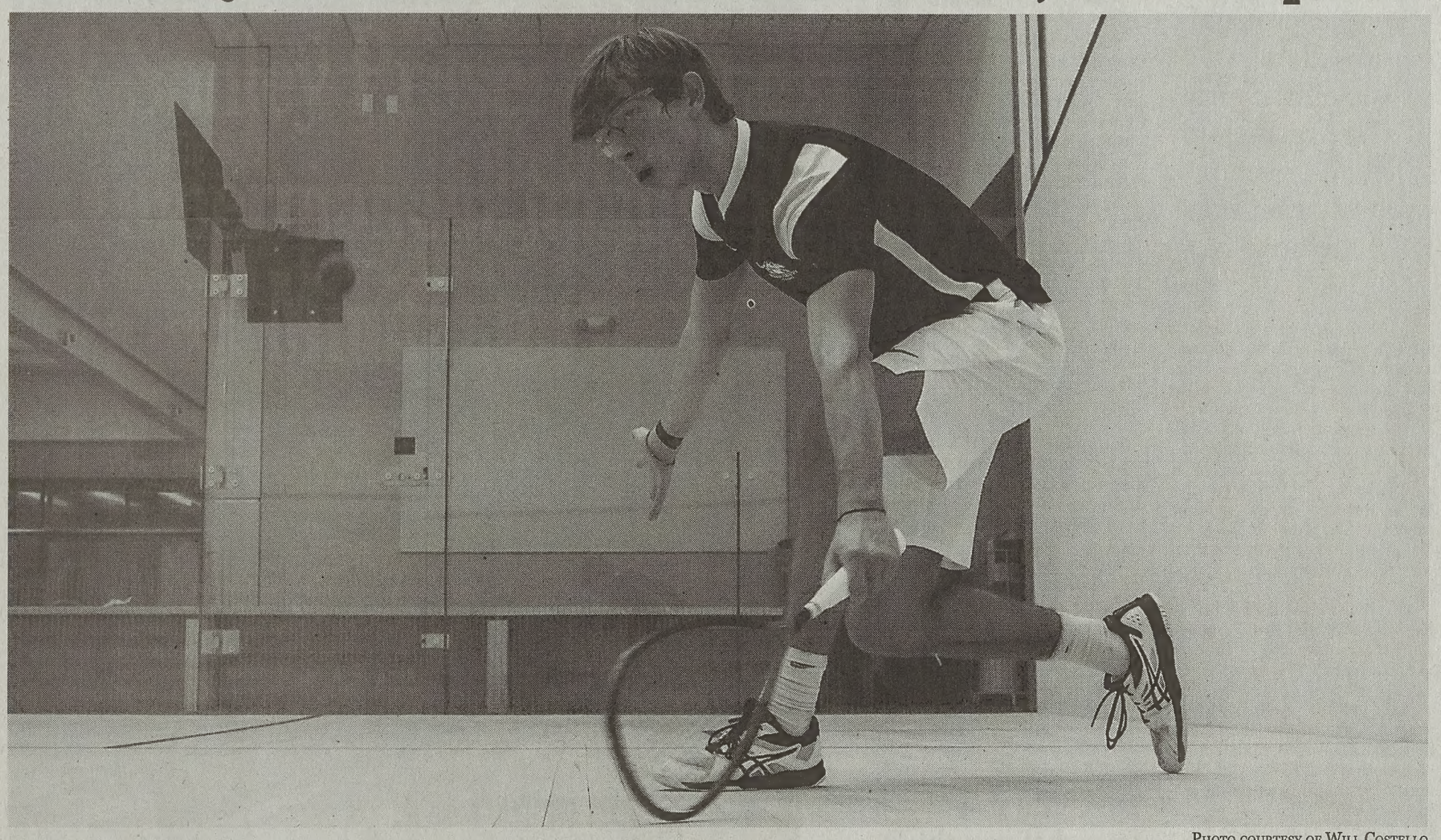


Photo courtesy of Will Costello

Alexis Ballo '25 reaches for a shot.

By BLAISE SIEFER
Senior Sports Editor

Alexis Ballo '25, from Baltimore, Md., is a first-year on the men's squash team. In this installment of "Seven Questions," Ballo discusses what drew him to Middlebury, his favorite memory on the squash team, and his favorite dining hall meal.

Blaise Siefer: When and why did you start playing squash?

Alexis Ballo: I started hitting when I was four. That was because my dad played—he played a bit after college.

BS: What drew you to Middlebury?

AB: The coaches, Mark Lewis and David Cromwell, are fantastic. Also, I talked to a few people on the team [before applying] and they said the community was really strong, and the academics at Middlebury are obviously rigorous. Overall, the community, coaches, and team vibe all seemed really strong.

BS: What's been your favorite memory on the team?

AB: We were playing Tufts in the NESCAC tournament at Trinity College. We were tied 4–4 and we needed our captain [Nate Moll] to win his match. Well, he was down 2–1, and the day before he had a 103 degree fever. But he managed to come back, win the fourth game, and win the fifth game, 11–1. And we all ran onto the court and lifted him up –– that was awesome.

BS: What's your favorite part about the team?

AB: It's really a welcoming community. Getting acclimated to Middlebury while knowing people was really helpful. If you have questions about life or anything, they're family, and we're all here together. We're all very lucky to have each other.

BS: What's one goal you have during your time on the squash team at Middlebury?

AB: This year, we lost a few matches to Bates, Amherst, and Williams, so I would really like to see us beat them. We beat Bates after losing twice to them this season, but I would love to see us beat them consistently.

BS: Favorite dining hall meal?

AB: Proc's thanksgiving. It's sneaky good. Everyone hates it but it's sneaky good. The turkey is delicious –– I love turkey. And the gravy! You get a little salad on the side, too, and it's just great.

BS: What's one Middlebury bucket list item?

AB: I would love to hike the TAM. I've been to the Knoll but I haven't been around it much. I love hiking. It's super fun and a great way to get close to people.

Editor's Note: This interview has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

ALUM CONVERSATION WITH DOUGLAS PERKINS '94, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND FINANCE AT THE MIDDLEBURY MUSEUM OF ART

By YINUO WANG
Contributing Podcaster

Douglas Perkins '94 majored in economics and minored in art history. He was a cyclist and lived in Colorado for a while. Now he is the associate director of operations and finance at the Middlebury Museum of Art. He has studied and worked at Middlebury for over twenty years. This interview has been edited for length and clarity. You can listen to the full interview at middleburycampus.com/section/podcasts.

Q: What's a typical day at the Middlebury Museum of Art now?

A: What I like about the museum is that most days are not typical. I handle the financial end of the museum almost every day, managing budgets and getting people paid. Aside from that, it can be anything from preparing content for social media to mundane things like making sure that copy machines still work, or buying artworks at auctions. It really runs the gamut, but every day is different.

Q: Is this job what you imagined yourself doing when you were in college?

A: Actually, it's not. When I got to Middlebury, I declared myself as an economics major. I had aspirations of going into finance and investment. In fact, when I graduated from college, I had an invitation from a capital management firm in New York. I was a cyclist at Middlebury and took a detour for a bit. I moved to Colorado and I was a semi-pro cyclist for a few years, and that provided a break in my plans to give me some flexibility to look at some different things. I actually moved back to Middlebury, and was working as a bartender and waiter at Mr. Ups here when the opportunity at the museum came up. And it was really just a two month thing, and two months turned into twenty years.

> I have heard stories of people hiking in Mongolia or South America, and they come around a corner and see people wearing Middlebury sweatshirts, and it's like seeing old friends, even if you've never met before.

Q: What inspired you to become a cyclist and how did you transition from that to the museum work now?

A: I started cycling when I was in high school and continued in college with Middlebury's club team. I fell in love with it. In spring we would have circuit racing with other colleges. I decided that I wanted to pursue that as a living. I moved to Colorado just after graduation but I found myself daydreaming about summertime in Vermont. I knew I had to move back, so I did, and continued to race here for a bit. In 2001, I had gotten tired of the bartending industry. I was constantly having to deal with liquor control problems. I had lots of college kids coming down the hill and trying to drink with their fake IDs. I said, "This is not the interaction I want to have with people." So I left the restaurant. A friend of mine called me up and said "One of my coworkers at the museum is going on maternity leave and we need somebody to fill in. Would you be interested?" So I applied and they hired me for two months. My friend actually left the museum for another job in those two months, so I moved into her job and have been there ever since.

Q: What inspired you to come back to Middlebury? What is special about it?

A: Middlebury has a reputation. I have heard stories of people hiking in Mongolia or South America, and they come around a corner and see people wearing Middlebury sweatshirts, and it's like seeing old friends, even if you've never met before. I actually had a hard time leaving Middlebury. I have always felt at home in Addison County. You can be right on the edge of everything but also in the middle of nowhere at the same time. Even when I was living in town, I regularly came to campus. There used to be a Rehearsals Cafe in the Center for the Arts, and I'd go in there and meet friends, or I'd go to the library, always seeing people that I knew. There are always lively ideas being thrown around and never a dull moment.

Q: What is your favorite spot or favorite moment on campus?

A: There are lots of favorite moments, and some of them I probably can't mention. Actually, I would not exist without Middlebury. My parents met here in the 1960s, doing their graduate work in French. My mother used to say that she picked my father out of a catalogue. He was here the summer before she started and was the carillonneur (bell ringer) for the French choir, so his photo was in one of the viewbooks. The following year my mother saw that and said "I want to go to Middlebury and meet that guy." And she did, and without that I wouldn't be here. Some of my favorite spots are gone now. If anybody remembers the orange shag carpeting in the loft of the old library, it was a comfortable place where you could study at all hours of the night. The campus itself was its own reward.

Q: How did you choose your major, and how did Middlebury help you in this process?

A: I knew from the getgo that I wanted to be an economics major. Money, numbers and strategies have always come easily to me, so I knew I wanted to explore that. I learned a lot over the course of four years here. I started with a French minor, but at some point changed to art history, and it really drew me. It allowed me to embrace the creative side of me. But there was nobody saying "You should be looking at museum careers" so it wasn't on my radar. In hindsight, looking at what I'm doing now, taking my economics major and minor in art history, the two collide rather perfectly in the role that I have.

Q: Aside from the career aspect, looking back to your journey as a student in Middlebury, how did it help you to prepare for your life now?

A: There is so much to be said for a liberal arts education. The one thing that Middlebury taught me in particular was how to learn and how to think, much more than the facts, figures and the track of study you've chosen. It taught me how to acquire skill sets on the fly, look at primary source materials, how to analyze and come to my own conclusions about things.

> Dive into it. Figure out what you think about it. That's what Middlebury taught me to do above all else.

That's really important wherever you go, especially nowadays. There's a move away from doing one's own analysis and coming to one's own conclusions and then testing those in the public sphere. Dive into it. Figure out what you think about it. That's what Middlebury taught me to do above all else.

Courtesy of Douglas Perkins

Douglas Perkins '94 as a student (above) and a today (below). Perkins studied economics and art history at Middlebury, and currently works as the associate director of operation and finance at the Middlebury Museum of Art.